

## The different kinds of liking by thegoddessinzerogravity

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** preteen boys are hard enough to understand, without being a telekinetic 12 year old who can visit alternate dimensions

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2016-08-10

**Updated:** 2016-08-10

**Packaged:** 2022-03-31 22:30:04

**Rating:** Not Rated

**Warnings:** Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 658

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

Eleven scrapes the salt from the immersion tank itching her skin and ponders Mike's odd behavior.

## The different kinds of liking

Nancy's dress, Eleven thinks, is quite beautiful. The older girl seems oddly pleased that Eleven chose that particular dress to disguise herself in, and had gently (just as gently as Mike when he speaks to her and touches her hands, maybe *gentle* is in Nancy just like *gentle* is in Mike, maybe *gentle* is something that is in all brothers and sisters like how Mike and Nancy have the same hair and the same eyes) pressed down on her shoulders and straightened the dirty and wrinkled cloth, and smiled at her.

Unfortunately, it is also quite itchy, and Eleven's fear and pain from the bizarre nothing-and-everything choking emptiness from the Upside Down is quickly being replaced with discomfort from the drying salt on her skin. She turns her arm around and holds it close to her face until it is almost touching her nose, and starts to scratch the arm. The tiny lines of pain streaking down the limb from her dirty fingernails is almost exhilarating, and she continues scratching until long, pale red bruise-like marks appear on her skin.

Then she stops and tugs her arms around her knees, and then rests her head on top of her folded up knees encircled by her arms, all curled up in a neat little ball of Eleven. She feels safe then, head-on-knees and arms-around-knees and chest-against-knees and dress-around-chest, safely wrapped up in her own arms and warmth.

Despite the distractions of itchy dresses and Nancy smiles and head-on-knees-under-arms-against-chest, Mike still drifts to the forefront of her mind. Mike is gentle, yes, but he is also sweet, because Eggos are sweet and Eleven discovered Eggos and Mike very close to each other, so Mike is gentle and sweet like Eggos. Eleven likes Mike. She likes Dustin and Lucas too (and everyone assures her that she will like Will too when she meets him), but Mike is soft and quiet in a way that they are not, and knows her appreciation of the soft and quiet too.

Dustin and Lucas are her friends but they are very loud and they are always moving and the wildness of their energy sometimes makes her head ache because she can *feel* it grating against her, so she tucks her arms a little tighter around her and leans her head into her knees

harder.

Mike liked her too. Eleven knew there were different types of liking. You can like Eggos because they are sweet and good to eat. You can like someone, how Dustin and Lucas and Mike and Will like each other, what made them go out into the woods and explore forgotten bike trails and fight and suggest going into the Upside Down for them. You can like someone the way Joyce likes *loves* Will, the kind of liking-loving that makes her eyes burn and arms shake when he is away from her in the Upside Down for so long.

There is also the kind of liking that Eleven knows the least about, which is the kind of liking where you kiss, and sometimes that kind of liking makes babies happen but not always. Mike and Nancy are here because their Mama and Papa liked each other with that kind of liking. (She thinks that maybe Jonathan and Nancy like each other in the kissing and sometimes babies way).

Mike, Eleven thinks, likes her in the third way. Where sometimes babies and kissing happen. She also thinks that maybe Mike is a little ashamed or embarrassed that he likes her in the kissing way. She knows very little about the kissing kind of liking, but she thinks maybe it would be nice to like Mike in that way, except she isn't sure if liking someone in that way means you can't like them in other ways.

Thinking about it, Eleven would quite like to like Mike in the kissing way, as long as she could still like him in the other ways too.

### **Author's Note:**

God, I love thinking about Eleven as a character, and trying to imagine how she sees the world. We do get a bit of her perceptions of right/wrong and friendship, but those were brought out in rather . . . extreme circumstances.

I wanted to try and get in her head, to explore how her unique and simply worldview would play into something more causal, like relationships and trying to connect with more people.

Feedback appreciated!